

The Biography of Mayor Shirley Franklin

In 2001 the people of Atlanta elected Shirley Franklin, a first time candidate for public office, to serve as the 58th Mayor of the City of Atlanta. She also became the first female mayor and the first African American woman to serve as mayor of a major southern city.



Since her inauguration in 2002, Mayor Franklin has worked to build a “Best in Class” managed city by strengthening existing frameworks, implementing progressive changes and making the tough decisions necessary to make Atlanta better. She returned accountability to city government, worked to increase effectiveness and efficiency in government operations and to strengthen private and non-profit partnerships in the city and metropolitan Atlanta region. The Administration is continuing to improve financial and budget management practices as part of the reform plans initiated six years ago.

Some of Mayor Franklin’s accomplishments include

- Implemented one of the strongest ethics reform programs in the nation and an Ethics Task Force.
- Laid the foundation for a \$3.2 billion overhaul of the city's aging water and sewer system.
- Convinced the 2004 General Assembly to allow Atlanta to place a municipal option sales tax before the voters that overwhelmingly passed and generated money for Clean Water Atlanta.
- Completed the \$6.3 billion Fifth Runway of the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport.
- Established a commission of city leaders to study the problem of homelessness in the city and creating the "Blueprint to End Homelessness in Atlanta in 10 years." The flagship project, the 24/7 Gateway Center, designed to serve 500 people a day with needed personal and health services, opened in July 2005.
- Implemented the New Century Economic Development Plan outlining an economic vision through 2009 that includes Brand Atlanta, the Beltline, and transportation improvements.
- Created "Mayor's Youth Program", a program for every Atlanta Public Schools high school senior designed to engage students in planning for their future beyond high school, whether it is college, the workforce, technical school or the military. Since 2005, over 900 Atlanta Public School graduates were helped with tuition, laptops and other assistance through the Next Step program.
- Administered the \$150 million Quality of Life Bond Program, which leveraged funds to add new sidewalks, beautify major arterials, enhanced both pedestrian and vehicle safety by improving traffic signals, provided for walkways, trails and amenities, as well as reconstruction and resurfacing damaged streets and bridges. Nearly 1,200 projects are underway or completed.
- Helped secure the Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers for the City of Atlanta with corporate and community partnership to help guarantee a loan for \$32 million.
- Established an Environmental Initiative and programs that reduce operational expenses and preserve our environment. The City of Atlanta has one of the highest percentages of LEED Certified buildings in the US.
- Established the “Dear John” public education campaign to end the commercial sexual exploitation of children in Atlanta.

Some of Mayor Franklin's other city focused accomplishments are evident in police and fire improvements which include the Atlanta Police Department's (APD) first-ever accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies. Since 2002, the overall crime rate in Atlanta is down 21%. Atlanta Fire Rescue developed a best-in-class customer service program to assist residents as the first responders during critical emergencies and gained national accreditation.

Mayor Franklin served as one of the co-chairs of the 2008 National Democratic Convention; she is also the former Treasurer of the Democratic Party of Georgia and former president for the Conference National Democratic Mayors. She has held leadership roles in the US Conference of Mayors as the chair of the Women's Caucus, co-chair of the Tourism Task Force and a member of the Environmental Committee. She was the first Atlanta mayor to serve as president of the Georgia Municipal Association, which is the only state organization that represents the 502 local governments in Georgia. She is also a founding member of the Metro Atlanta Mayors Association that represents an alliance of 65 mayors in the metropolitan Atlanta area.

She serves as a member of the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), as Chair of Atlanta Development Authority, and as Chair of the Board of Trustees of CIFAL-Atlanta. She is a CARE USA ambassador and a member of the National Conference of Black Mayor's Business Council. She is secretary of the Board of the Atlanta Regional Commission and serves as Chair of its Ethics Committee. She previously served as the Founding Vice President of the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRETA).

Her community appointments include, the Board of Trustees for Spelman College and Paideia School in Atlanta. She also served as a member of the board of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Neighborhood Arts Center, Atlanta Black United Fund, the Expansion Arts Advisory Committee for the National Endowment for the Arts, Georgia Arts Council, National Urban Coalition, and the Atlanta Convention & Visitors Bureau. Franklin has a lifelong love for the arts and years of community and political engagement that demonstrate her continued commitment to public service.

Mayor Franklin earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology from Howard University in Washington, DC and was awarded her Masters of Arts degree in Sociology from the University of Pennsylvania. She has received honorary degrees from Howard University, the Atlanta College of Art, Cambridge College, Spelman College, Morehouse College, Clark Atlanta University, Tuskegee University, Oglethorpe University and the University of Pennsylvania.

Franklin previously served as the Commissioner of Cultural Affairs for Mayor Maynard Jackson and was subsequently named Chief Administrative Officer and City Manager for Mayor Andrew Young. When Maynard Jackson was elected to his third term, Franklin served as Executive Officer of Operations. Under the administrations of mayors Jackson and Young, Franklin was responsible for the day-to-day operations of all city departments including the airport and zoning.

Franklin joined the Atlanta Committee for Olympic Games in early 1991 as Senior Vice President of External Relations. In this position her responsibilities included community, local government and labor relations and the development and successful implementation of the Committees Affirmative Action & Minority Enterprise Program. She also served as CEO of Shirley Clarke Franklin & Associates, a management and consulting firm for public and community affairs.

Mayor Shirley Franklin has been featured in The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, Fortune magazine, Black Enterprise, Essence and many other local and national publications. Governing magazine named her 2004 Public Official of the Year. In 2005, Time Magazine named her one of the top five mayors in the country; she is ranked among the top ten mayors in the world by the World Mayor Internet organization and has been named one of "America's Best Leaders" by U.S. News and World Report. That same year, Esquire Magazine named her one of the best and brightest and American City and County Magazine named her Municipal Leader of the Year. Mayor Franklin received the prestigious 2005 John F. Kennedy Profile in Courage Award. In 2006, she was honored with the Southern Institute for Business and Professional Ethics' Ethics Advocate Award and is widely viewed as one of America's best leaders. In 2007, Newsweek Magazine named her one of the women to watch in their Women & Power issue.

Franklin is a 35-year resident of Atlanta and regularly addresses audiences and organizations on a variety of policy, economic and urban issues.